

December 2011 • [www.army.mil/soldiers](http://www.army.mil/soldiers)

# Soldiers

The Official U.S. Army Magazine



## IRAQ

OPPORTUNITY THROUGH SACRIFICE—THE U.S. EFFORT IN IRAQ



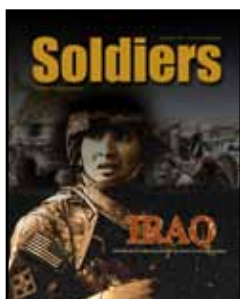


# Soldiers

December 2011 • VOLUME 66, NO. 12



Iraqi soldiers conduct small-unit tactics training at Joint Security Station Old Ministry of Defense, Iraq, June 15. The training was conducted with Soldiers assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division-Center. (Photo by Spc. William A. Joeckel)



[ On the Cover ]

Iraq takes charge of its security with help from U.S. and other partners. Cover design by Peggy Frierson.

[ Coming Next Month ]

The fight to become the Army's Best Warriors.



Iraqi Soldiers with the 7th Iraqi Army Division get hands-on training, Oct. 8, on how to build, run and maintain a forward area refueling point capable of supporting aircraft at Camp Ramadi. Paratroopers from 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division assisted in the training. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Nancy Lugo)

**December 2011**

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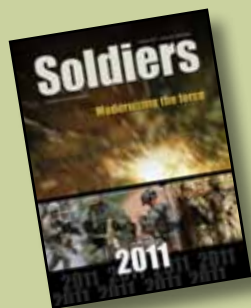
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**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
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December 1, 2011

This month's issue of Soldiers magazine marks the transition of the U.S. presence in Iraq. The Iraqi military and police forces will take sole control over security missions and responsibilities once handled by American servicemen and women. The U.S. presence will become largely non-military, and a sizable U.S. embassy staff in Baghdad will become the public face of America.

This month, we highlight the continued relationship between Iraq and the U.S., and how this relationship, built over the past eight years, has helped spur Iraq's continued growth and built a foundation for a successful future.

In these stories, it is our hope that you will see the hard work and cooperation that goes into such a monumental transition, from property and equipment transfer to bolstering the financial infrastructure with viable jobs programs.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the men and women — civilian and military, American and Iraqi — who have sacrificed so much for the better part of a decade to set the course for a new era in Iraq.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carrie L. McLeroy", is positioned above the printed name.

Carrie L. McLeroy  
Editor in chief

# The office of security cooperation maintaining a presence in Iraq ● once soldiers go home

Story by C. Todd Lopez

**B**Y Dec. 31, a large portion of the United States presence in Iraq will be gone — but not all of it.

In place of the United States Forces-Iraq presence, America will instead have a largely non-military presence — a sizable U.S. embassy staff in Baghdad that is charged with taking up in Iraq where the military left off.

It will be a big change from what Iraqis are used to seeing in their country, which has had a large U.S. military presence since a U.S.-led invasion toppled Iraq's sitting dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003.

"The public face of the U.S. government will (now) be principally civilian," said former U.S. embassy spokesman, David Ranz. "For the average Iraqi, if he had any direct interaction with somebody from the U.S. government up until now, chances are it was somebody in green."

The embassy staff, under James F. Jeffrey, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, will number a few thousand, Ranz said. The embassy will be performing many of the missions the military used to. And while Ranz said the size of the embassy staff is nowhere near close to the size of the USF-I presence in Iraq, he feels confident in the embassy's ability to take over the mission.

"We feel like we're going to be able to conduct the mission effectively," he said. "It won't be exactly the same, and it won't be quite as robust, but we at the State Department do this kind of thing in dozens of embassies around the world. So we feel confident we will be able to take it over."

Ranz said that the military equipping and training mission, along with the police-training mission, are probably the two largest functions that will transfer from military to civilian leader-



U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr., left, assumes command of NATO Training Mission-Iraq, from U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Michael Ferriter, center, in a change of command ceremony led by Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commanding general of United States Force-Iraq on Forward Operating Base Union III, Baghdad, Oct. 1. (Photo by Sgt. Joseph Vine)

ship with the transition in December. As part of the police-training mission, Ranz said, the embassy staff will focus more on "executive-level" training.

"It's the train-the-trainer approach," Ranz said. "Our State Department's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement is right now in the process of assuming responsibility for that. They have been involved in police training programs around the world. The actual implementers are principally police officials — American police officials who have been involved in international training in the past."

While all USF-I forces and most military personnel will leave Iraq before the end of 2011, about 120 U.S. military personnel will stay behind, as part of the embassy's Office of Security Cooperation.

One of the missions of OSC-Iraq will be to equip and train the Iraqi

military, a mission that previously belonged to USF-I. Lt. Gen. Michael Ferriter, the former deputy commanding general, USF-I Advise and Train, handed over command of the newly stood up OSC-I to its first director, Lt. Gen. Robert Caslen, Oct. 1.

The OSC-I will continue to develop the relationship between the U.S. military and the Iraqi military. Caslen will report to the ambassador, and will conduct equipping and training missions in the country, as well as facilitate foreign military sales — similar to other OSC offices in places like Turkey and Egypt.

"OSC-I will work for the ambassador and deliver foreign military sales, as well as provide the international military education and training opportunities," Ferriter said. "(It) will also work with Iraqi officials to identify young Iraqi officers and NCOs to go





back to our schools each year, and also we will have the ability, on a much smaller scale, to advise and mentor Iraqi military leaders.”

When the Iraqi military wants to purchase new military hardware, Caslen’s OSC-I, under the embassy, will be responsible for making that happen.

Already, Ferriter said, the Iraqis have purchased helicopters, Humvees, M-1 battle tanks, M113 armored personnel carriers, howitzers and other items. The Iraqis are also now committed to purchasing new F-16 aircraft.

The foreign military sales program, Ferriter said, will provide Iraq a “corruption-free” ability to get the military equipment it needs to defend itself. Foreign military sales packages, the general added, usually include not

only equipment, but also training and maintenance capabilities. The training and maintenance portions of the contract will most likely be civilian contractors, in either the United States or in Iraq, the general said, though facilitation will fall under OSC-I.

On an Iraqi purchase of patrol boats, for instance, Ferriter said the Iraqis were able to send their sailors to the Louisiana to receive training from civilian contractors as well as U.S. Sailors.

The OSC-I will also be responsible for continued training opportunities between the Iraqi and U.S. militaries, the general said. And such training opportunities will occur the same as they do in other nations where the U.S. has partnerships with militaries.

“The two countries will get



An Iraqi child looks around during provincial reconstruction team (PRT) effort to distribute chickens to farmers in the town of Badoush, near Mosul, May 9, 2010. PRTs stimulate the local economy by promoting agriculture and free trade. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Manhea Kim)



Managers from eight of Iraq's leading banks listen to the opening remarks of the "Banking on Iraqi Business" conference hosted by the 15th Financial Management Company at Al Faw Palace in Baghdad, June 1, 2010. The focus of the meeting was the important role electronic funds transfer and modern core-banking systems play in strengthening Iraq's economy. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roger M. Dey)

together and they will decide what relationship they want and how they will do it," Ferriter said. "The first part of that is to send their officers and soldiers to our schools in the United States. With a lot of countries we have joint exercises, like with Thailand we have Cobra Gold."

When the American embassy in Iraq works with the Iraqis to develop a country plan, such training opportunities will be part of the discussion, Ferriter said.

While continuing to work to develop Iraq's security capability will be an important role for the U.S. embassy there, Ranz said the embassy will focus on other areas as well, such as economic development.

"Everything from economic

cooperation, political and diplomatic cooperation, educational, scientific and technical cooperation, law enforcement and health care," Ranz said. "It's a very wide range of civilian areas where we have programming. And that will become the focus of our diplomatic relationship with the Iraqi government, as well as our relationship with the people. And the security issues will become a subset of that rather than the principle focus."

One area of concern for Iraq's future development, Ranz said, is ensuring the country expands its economy beyond the oil industry — for both expansion of employment opportunities and to ensure its economy isn't entirely dependent on an industry subject to price fluctuations.

"Right now, Iraq relies almost exclusively on oil revenue for its budgetary revenue," Ranz said. "And the economy in general is heavily reliant on the oil sector. That is not generally a hugely employment-generating sector, and unemployment is a very big problem here."

As in other parts of the Arab world, Ranz said, large cadres of youth in Iraq are unemployed.

"(They) do not feel they have a voice in the future of their country, and eventually they will go to the street and make their views known," Ranz said. "Iraq is in many ways well ahead of where these other countries were, because it does have a representative government. People do have an opportunity to express their



views, and they do demonstrate. But unemployment is a serious problem. In the medium-term Iraq needs to find jobs by promoting and developing its private sector.”

Ranz said the private sector in Iraq is “feeble” today, and that is something the embassy is discussing with the Iraqi government — in particular, how to develop a more investor-friendly climate that would bring money and opportunity to Iraq.

“In order to get a lot more investment and in a broader range of areas of the economy, there needs to be a focus ... on commercial courts that are seen as efficient and fair,” Ranz said. “And there is an issue with visas and getting workers in here that needs to be addressed. So I would say the other big challenge is Iraq generating a more diversified economy that is attractive to foreign investors, and creates the employment that is going to be necessary to absorb the youth, who are still growing pretty rapidly and don’t have enough jobs.”

Ranz said in Iraq, the U.S. government has spent as much as \$58 billion in reconstruction and development, while the Iraqi government has invested around \$110 billion. Most of that spending, he said, has focused heavily on reconstruction, schools, hospitals and clinics, for instance

“That is not traditionally the way the U.S. government does development,” Ranz said. “But it was the focus that was needed in a post-conflict environment. We are now moving into a new era, where what we really need to do is work with the Iraqis to develop their capacity to meet their own needs and do their own work. Whether it is working with the Ministry of Agriculture to work on new techniques for water conservation, whether it is working with the government and the private sector on how the private sector can build up its capacity to generate employment — those are going to be our primary focus.”

Until the withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Iraq, the American embassy in that country was very much dependent on the services provided by the military

there, Ranz said. That is something the embassy will need to learn to get along without.

“We rely on USF-I for a lot of logistical and security and life support needs, and we are in the process of assuming those responsibilities,” Ranz said. “This is the largest transition from a military-led to a civilian-led effort since the Marshall plan in Europe. It is an enormous undertaking. Smoothly taking over the areas of responsibility in the areas of life support and security and logistics that the military provides us right now, that’s probably going to be our biggest challenge.”

Nevertheless, Ranz said he believes the U.S. embassy in Iraq is ready to assume responsibility from USF-I, and to continue the partnership there between the United States and the newly formed government in Iraq.

“We have spent every waking hour of the nearly year that I’ve been here, and I’m sure a lot of time before that, painstakingly going through everything


we need to do in order to effectively take over and ensure a smooth transition,” Ranz said. “This embassy has some of the most experienced officers anywhere in the State Department.”

Ranz also recognized that USF-I, and the servicemembers who fell under that command, have laid the groundwork for what the embassy staff must now do on its own.

“I want to give UFS-I and all its antecedents and all of the hundreds of thousands of Soldiers that have cycled through here — in some case three, four or more times — the credit they deserve,” he said. “If we do succeed in this venture, and I am confident in our capacity to do so, it will be in no small part to the effort and dedication and sacrifice that our military brethren have made here. We can do our mission, but we will miss that partnership with USF-I, and we will miss the people that we have grown to love and trust on a day-to-day basis.” ♦



Local Iraqi business owners stand in line to collect money during the micro grant money transfer at New Region in Wasit province, Iraq, June 1, 2011. The micro grant is money that is being given to small business owners to help boost the economy as part of Operation New Dawn. (Photo by Spc. Nathan Franco)



Members of United States Forces-Iraq and Iraq Training and Advisory Mission-Ministry of Defense oversee construction of the Iraq International Academy June 30, in Baghdad. Iraqi security forces and the government of Iraq are educating military and civilian personnel in public administration, management, logistics, strategic planning and analysis, rule of law, and governance at the school. The academy also provides a centralized location and state-of-the-art facilities for conferences and executive seminars for the government of Iraq and its global partners. (Photo by John Helms)

# Partners for peace

*Civil capacity projects help improve prosperity in Iraq*

Story by C. Todd Lopez

ELECTRICITY, water, schools, hospitals, transportation networks and an active police force are among the things often taken for granted in the United States. In

Iraq however, these services are greatly appreciated. United States Forces-Iraq has been working to develop these and other “civil capacity” elements there in advance of USF-I’s departure from the country at the end of 2011.

Since 2003, reconstruction efforts have resulted in an estimated 70,000 projects at a cost of \$58 billion, ac-

cording to Brig. Gen. Scott F. “Rock” Donahue, director, USF-I J-7.

Some of the notable projects include electricity and power plants. There are also many high-profile water projects, he said, including one on the Euphrates River, in addition to a number of water treatment plants.

“When you look at what we’ve





Lt. Col. Cameron Cantlon, commander of 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, United States Division-Center, watches as a member of the provincial council cuts the ribbon to open Dabuni Elementary School. Soldiers from the squadron were on hand at the opening of the school and were instrumental in assisting with its construction. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Stuart White)



Chickens distributed by a provincial reconstruction team peek through an opening in their enclosure May 9, 2010, in the town of Badoush, near Mosul, Iraq. The PRT aimed to stimulate the local economy through promotion of agriculture and free trade. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Manhea Kim)

done in Iraq since 2003, this is pretty impressive,” he said. “Contributing 25 percent of the nation’s potable water, we provided 2.45 million cubic meters of safe clean water per day to the Iraqis. (We) completed more than 1,600 school projects and over 800 projects to strengthen Iraq’s electrical transmission grid. (We) contributed to the con-

struction of nearly 1,200 bridges and executed numerous upgrades and repair projects to improve Iraq’s transportation systems, roads, railroads, aviation, ports, medical facilities, public works facilities and oil and electricity infrastructures.”

Donahue, an engineer, and formerly the commanding general, U.S.

Army Engineer Division, South Pacific, and director, Multi-National Corps Iraq C7 from 2008 to 2009, credits the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for much of the civil capacity rebuilding efforts in Iraq.

“Much of the U.S. construction effort here was led by the Corps of Engineers,” he said, adding that the



Workers from Iraq's Zaidon milk processing facility pour a fresh batch of raw milk out into a filtering tank, Jan. 20, demonstrating the first step in its transition to a packaged, marketable product during a tour. (Photo by Lt. Col. David Volkman)

Gulf Region Division of the Corps, activated in 2004, had been somewhat of a household term for seven and a half years. The division was consolidated to the Gulf Region District in 2009, and Donahue said their “full-spectrum construction management” work continues.

“Since 2004, we’ve been involved with over 5,000 projects worth more than \$8.4 billion,” he said.

The Corps of Engineers helped double the amount of power to the Iraqi electrical grid, for instance, and also helped increase oil production capacity by 3 million barrels a day.

Additionally, the COE worked on other public works projects including schools, hospitals, railroads, road construction and airport construction, “all designed to help build that civil institutional capacity,” Donahue said.

The COE efforts were augmented at the tactical level, where divisions, brigades and battalions executed commander-driven reconstruction projects at the provincial level. Those efforts are part of the Commanders Emergency Response Program. There is also an Iraqi version of the program, the ICERP.

Donahue said the U.S. government has invested about \$4 billion in CERP since 2004. About \$2.1 billion of that funded more than 15,000



Iraqi school girls work on computers supplied by the U.S. government and Babel Provincial Reconstruction Team members, during Babel Technology Initiative, in the classroom of Al Amal Female Primary School, in Al Shomali district, of Babel, Oct. 26, 2010. (Photo by Spc. Charles Willingham)

construction projects, while just less than \$2 billion funded 22,000 non-construction projects, he said.

Lieutenant Col. Patrick Campbell, the civil affairs development chief with USF-I J-9, credits the 101st Airborne Division with the idea for CERP.

“We had all this money that we had seized — Iraqi dinar — we had truckloads of it,” Campbell said. The 101st commander had “wanted to do something with it to get people back to work.”

Campbell said it was initially sug-

gested that the money be used to pay Iraqis to do such jobs as street cleaning, rubble clearing and trash pickup.

“From that sprang this funding called CERP,” Campbell said. “Now it’s a budgetary item we get allocated every year. It’s meant to provide the commander on the ground cash in his pocket to make an immediate influence. It has proven to be a wonderful tool.”

Campbell said CERP projects now cover “the width and breadth of the economy,” from sewer, power and agriculture construction, to economic





development in small, one-person sewing shops, to reconstituting the poultry industry. In one location, the program provided sewing machines and training to kick-start a small business. In another, it provided funds to raise chicks and better feed to help reinvigorate a poultry-processing facility.

"You name it, I think we've done it in Iraq," Campbell said.

One of the primary goals of CERP is to help develop the economy, in particular by eliminating unemployment.

"Most of the time when you have a

CERP a project, they are gunning to create jobs," the colonel said.

In Iraq, the economy is largely oil-based, he said. But that industry cannot employ the number of people that need jobs in the country. "One of the things we tried to do in Iraq is diversify the economy," Campbell said.

Agricultural development is a good target, he said, because agriculture is labor intensive—and creates a lot of jobs.

Campbell said that in Iraq,



Tom Pick, an agricultural adviser with the U.S. Department of State Provincial Reconstruction Team, checks the quality of fresh water pumped into the fields at a fish farm project funded by the government with local farms in the Salah ad Din province, Iraq, May 31, 2010. (Photo by Sgt. Jason Stewart)

transition to a free-market economy and away from the state-run economy that existed under the Saddam Hussein regime, has been something of a challenge.

"Before we came in here, the state would tell you what to grow, provide the seeds, provide the gas, tell you when to grow it. They'd come here and buy it for a set price and they'd repeat that over and over again," Campbell said.

He called the new free-market economy "alien" to Iraqis early on. "That was one of the things we did, a kind of education on free-market and how it works."

He likened the transition of moving to a free-market economy to that of the Soldier leaving the Army.

"It's kind of like when you leave the Army for the first time, you are out there without that safety net of a 'mother hen' taking care of everything," he said. "You have your food, you have your place to go, you have your retirement. When you are outside the Army and you have to get your own paycheck and you have to find your own way, it's kind of scary. That's the way it was for these folks

too. But it can be done, and if done properly, it can be profitable.”

U.S.-led economic development efforts in Iraq, involving nearly 14,000 projects, have resulted in some 23,000 new businesses being registered in the country over the last two years. The per capita income in the country has nearly doubled since then, and the Iraqi gross domestic product also doubled from \$59 billion in 2003, to \$117 billion in 2010. Additionally, the unemployment rate in the country has dropped to 15.3 percent from a staggering 28.1 in 2003.

Since 2003, civil capacity development in Iraq has improved the power supply in the country — increasing power production from 3,764 MW in 2003 to about 7,045 in 2011, for instance. With U.S. assistance, the water supply in Iraq now provides 2.45 million gallons of potable drinking water each day to Iraqis, and sewage projects process 1.2 million cubic meters of wastewater each day to the benefit of some 5.3 million Iraqis.

U.S.-assisted health care projects in the country have also provided 3.2 million children with vaccinations, and decreased the infant mortality rate by 68 percent. And those children will now attend any one of more than 12,000 schools in the country—up from just over 9,000 in 2002.

“I don’t know if there is a way to measure all we’ve done here,” Campbell said. “But when we came in 2003, the infrastructure was pretty crappy. It was not well maintained. The only person who had constant power and light was Saddam Hussein and his cronies. But I know if you look around this country now you will see the infrastructure and the economy is light years ahead of when we rolled in here. There is no comparison.”

When USF-I leaves Iraq, it will be the job of the Iraqis, with the help of the U.S. embassy, to keep the momentum going, and to main-



(Above) Members of a local women’s association prepare food started with funds from the Commander’s Emergency Response Program, in Bashika, Iraq, Oct. 3, 2010. The local women’s association started a food packaging business, which in the future will also provide catering services. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Reagan)



(Right) A member of a local women’s association, prepares food for packaging in Iraq, Oct. 3, 2010. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Reagan)



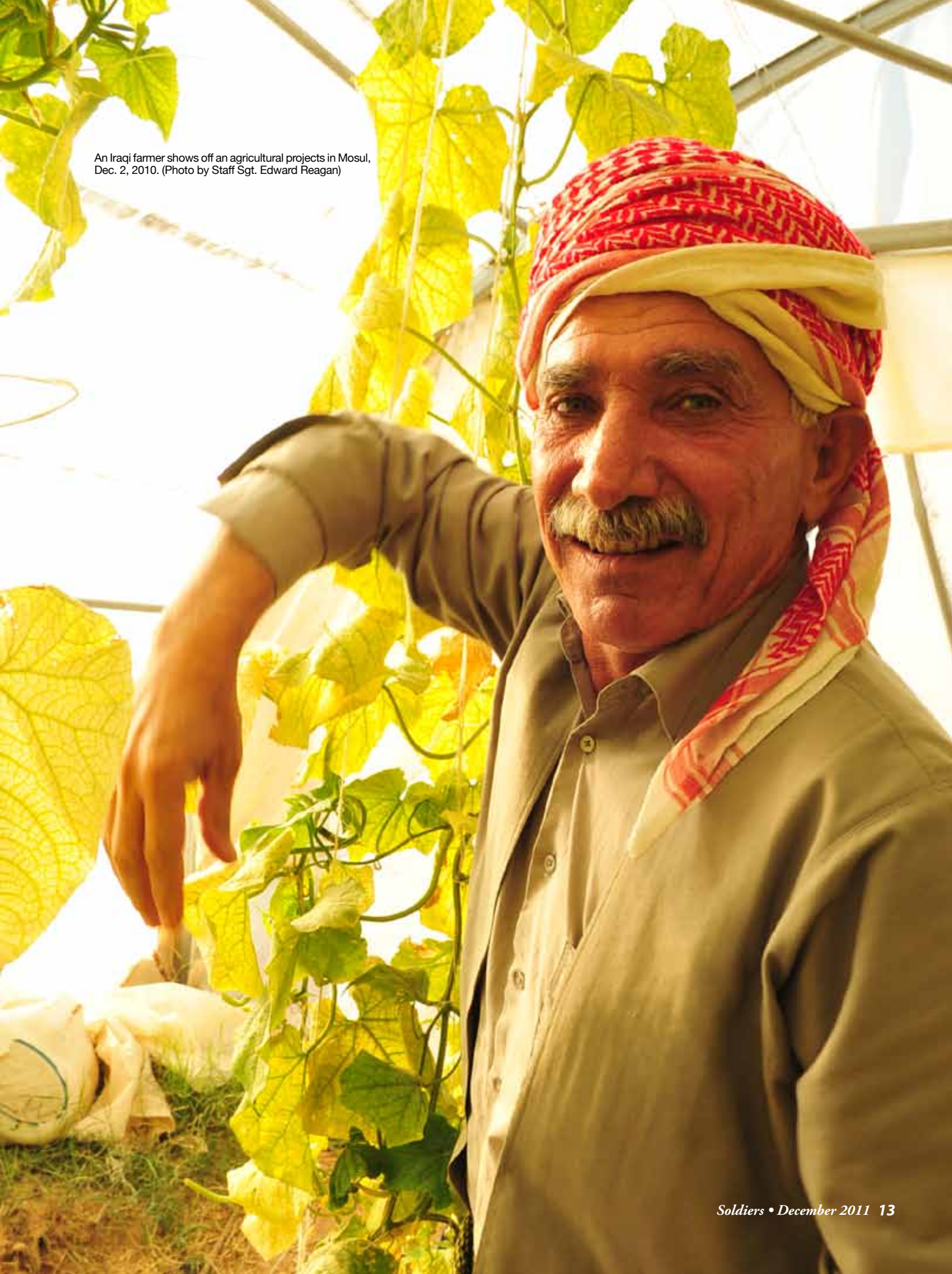
As part of a provincial reconstruction team effort, Iraqi workers distribute chickens to farmers in the town of Badoush, near Mosul, May 9, 2010. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Manhea Kim)

tain what was gained by civil capacity development there, Campbell said.

“A lot of the projects we do, we do with the understanding and agreement from the Iraqi government that they will continue them and maintain them,” he said. “One of the things we

do with the Department of State folks is to make sure that we keep helping with the governance, keep helping them understand that you have to maintain what you get and keep helping with the training to make sure that they can maintain it.” ♦



A close-up photograph of an elderly Iraqi farmer with a mustache, wearing a red and white patterned turban and a light-colored button-down shirt. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. He is standing in a greenhouse, with his right arm raised and hand near a large, yellow, translucent plant covering. The background shows the structure of the greenhouse and more of the plant coverings.

An Iraqi farmer shows off an agricultural projects in Mosul,  
Dec. 2, 2010. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Reagan)

# SECURITY

## *Iraqis stand ready to defend their own*

Story by C. Todd Lopez

**B**EGINNING in 2012, Iraqis will be responsible for defending their own borders and air space, and for policing their own people, both inside and outside their cities.

Since 2003, Iraqis have not had to perform that mission alone. United States Forces-Iraq has been there to provide security, train the Iraqis and watch over the Iraqi security forces as they learned to manage security issues on their own.

But the safety net of the Americans in Iraq will soon be gone, and Iraq will go it alone. To manage its own security, the Iraqi government has at its disposal an array of security forces — including an Iraqi army, navy and air force — as well as local civilian and federal police forces, border enforcement and oil police.

Today, the security situation in Iraq has become more stable than what it was at the height of the surge in 2007.

“Back in 2007, there were about 1,600 attacks each month in the country,” said Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick, the USF-I deputy commanding general for operations. “That is IED attacks and sniper attacks and grenade attacks and small-arms attacks and mortar attacks and rocket attacks. Today, there are about 400 attacks each month in the country, with the same kind of munitions. And those aren’t attacks just against U.S. forces, those are attacks against Iraqis as well.”

Iraqi security forces fall under both the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of the Interior. The MOD owns the Iraqi army, while the MOI owns the federal police; the roles of each have evolved over time.

For eight years now, Helmick said, Iraq has focused its security efforts inward. Now, he said, it is time to focus those efforts outward.

“What we are doing is transferring responsibility for internal security to the police forces and not the Army forces,” Helmick said. “The Iraqis want to eventually get the military out of

the cities, and instead of having the weapons pointed in, have the weapons pointed out.”

In July, Gen. Babacar Zebari, chief of staff of the Iraqi army, said the service has been preparing for that role for some time.

“About a year or year and half ago, we changed from an army of being the police, to being a real army,” he said. “We started from the beginning. We had battalions that did the tactical training. After we finish training with the battalions, we’ll do training from battalions to brigade divisions, so we can protect our borders.”

Zebari’s forces now include some 192,000 soldiers, with more than 5,000 Iraqi special operations forces as well. They train at nine Iraqi-run training centers that provide programs for individuals up to battalion level.

“We are now focusing on the training academies so the young generation can get trained and will be equal to the modern nations,” Zebari said.

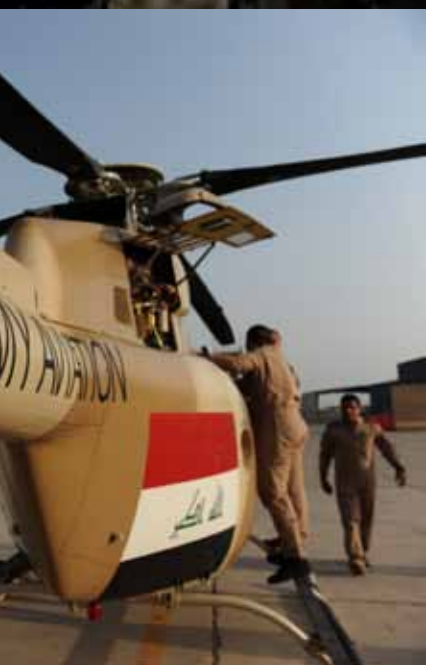
Zebari said his army is different now than what existed before the Americans came.

Iraqi Army Aviation Command, Squadron 21 members prepare a Bell 407 helicopter for takeoff at Taji Air Base, July 14. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Meares)





“Back in 2007, there were about 1,600 attacks each month in the country. ...Today, there are about 400 attacks each month in the country ... and those are attacks against Iraqis as well.”



Iraqi policemen rehearse procedures to enter and clear a building during a tactical demonstration at the Ministry of Interior's National Police Special Training Academy at Camp Dublin, in Baghdad, July 16. The academy has trained more than 7,000 policemen since its founding in 2008. (Photo by Spc. Timothy Koster)





"In the old days it was a draft and you had to force people to join the army," Zebari said. He credits the U.S. with helping develop an all-volunteer force, helping to foster better relations between the Iraqi officers and the enlisted force and developing rules of engagement.

"If an incident happened — somebody fired their weapons for instance — in those days they had no objections to just keep firing back at people, to eliminate everybody there, whether it was a neighborhood or a village,"

Zebari said. "Now, the whole system has changed."

Zebari also pointed out that civilians now control the military in Iraq, a departure from how the system operated under Saddam Hussein.

"The minister, he gets his power and his strength from the prime minister and the parliament, and parliament is elected by the people," Zebari said. "So a lot of things have changed."

The U.S. military provided training to the Iraqi Army to get it to where it is today, Zebari said. Included in that training, at the onset, was counter-terrorism training, which Zebari said he has been told his forces now excel at.

"Even now the coalition and the Americans are saying that the Iraqi Army is the most qualified Army fighting terrorism, because (it's) always on the ground," Zebari said.

(Left) An Iraqi policeman engages a simulated enemy during a tactical demonstration held at the Iraqi National Police Special Training Academy in Baghdad, July 16. (Photo by Spc. Timothy Koster)

(Below) Iraqi police and soldiers assigned to 11th Iraqi Army Division, practice on crowd control strategies at the former Ministry of Defense Headquarters in Baghdad, Feb. 28. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Douglas Tindle)





"I will never forget my work with the United States," Zebari said. "When I came here to take over this important position, it wasn't easy at all. But if it weren't for U.S. advisers and coalition advisers, we wouldn't have been able to build this establishment."

The MOI-run Federal Police, along with the local police unit in cities, now provide security inside the country, a role once performed by the Iraqi military.

"The Federal Police is a force somewhere in the middle between the Iraqi Army and the regular police," said Staff Lt. Gen. Hussein Jassim Al Awadi, chief of Iraqi Federal Police. "Using the Army in internal issues is against international law. That is why a lot of countries are seeking to own such a force. This force will be able to take control if the situation in this country is out of the control of the regular police, and to prevent having to use the regular Army."

The Iraqi Federal police force employs about 41,000, and has five



federal police training facilities around Iraq. Al Awadi said interest in serving in the force is growing, not only for the pay, but also for the confidence it is instilling in those who serve.

The general said that Americans training the police force units had at one point started giving units unique

titles, for instance.

"They start giving those units some titles, such as Delta, Scorpion, Cobra, etc.," Al Awadi said. "Such a title for the company, to train with the United States Army — it creates motivation inside them. If you try

(Above) An Iraqi soldier mans a PK machine gun from the turret of Humvee while on a convoy from Fallujah, June 11. The soldier is with the 1st Iraqi Army Division. (Photo by Spc. Kissta Feldner) (Below) Spc. Phillip Tingkang, a mechanic with 2nd Battalion, 92nd Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, examines the engine of an Iraqi Security Forces patrol vehicle with an Iraqi police officer at an Iraqi police checkpoint in Dhi Qar province, Oct. 5. (Photo by Pvt. Andrew Siorensky)





Iraqi soldiers fire their AK-47 rifles during marksmanship training under the supervision of U.S. special operations troops at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Feb. 23. The soldiers are assigned to 2nd Battalion, 26th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class James E. Foehl)

to move one of those police from one company to another, they will say, 'No I am a part of Cobra Company.' The U.S. Army has created pride inside these police in their units."

Confidence also comes from being trusted by civilian Iraqis, Al Awadi said. It was a confidence not easily gained.

"Thankfully, we were able to plant this trust and confidence with Iraqis," he said. "Now, individuals are proud to wear our uniform."

Another incentive is pay for the Federal Police force. In the Iraqi parliament, he said, there are efforts underway to make pay for the Federal

Police the same as that of their Iraqi Army equivalents. For a private in the Federal Police, that means about \$850 a month. For perspective, Al Awadi said, as a general in the Iraqi Army in 1996 he was making less than \$50 a month.

Some of those hoping to join the Iraqi Federal Police will pass through one of its academies in Baghdad, currently on Victory Base Complex. Staff Maj. Gen. Montather Mohammad, the Special Training Academy commander, runs the school.

At the schoolhouse, which stood up in 2008, Mohammad oversees training for those who will eventually serve in

the Iraqi Federal Police. The school has grown, he said, despite initial skepticism.

"In the beginning, a lot disagreed about having an academy. But now, because of our strong discipline and our hard work, those same people say they actually see now the results of this academy."

When the school first opened, he said, there were only 58 enlisted men and eight officers. Today, that has grown to 1,000 enlisted and 60 officers.

"This academy was built from nothing," Mohammad said. "We had this progress and this success because we insisted on having an academy."

The special training academy has had American, Australian and Italian police force instructors, but now, Mohammad said, the Iraqis are taking over their own training.

"At my academy, we are ready, we are going to take over the mission," he said. "The personal security detachment section, they don't have any foreign trainers anymore. We are taking care of that training by ourselves, 100 percent. And the (Italians) are now just observing, since the seventh training cycle."

Mohammad said the presence of the NATO-sponsored training mission there will continue. But he said he has asked for additional types of training, for different kinds of missions. In particular, he said, they are asking about air marshal training to provide security in the air. "That takes special skills," he said. Additionally, he said, with turmoil in neighboring Middle Eastern countries like Tunisia and Egypt, the police there are also learning riot control.

When the Americans leave Iraq, Helmick said it's been suggested that violence in Iraq will increase, as a parting shot of sorts, to muddy the perception of why the United States is leaving Iraq. If it happens, the general says USF-I will be un-phased, as should observers.

"We think the attacks are going to increase as we begin to depart in earnest, and we believe the reason for that is that the groups backed by Iranians will want to take credit having



the United States leave,” he said. “But we have an agreement with the government of Iraq ... that we are needed here until Dec. 31, 2011. We will honor that commitment, and we will leave here with honor and a successful mission. Nobody runs the United States of America out.”

When America does leave, the U.S. embassy will remain, and plans are underway to ensure a continuing partnership between U.S. forces and the Iraqi security forces, said Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan, the USF-I spokesman and J-9 director.

“One of the things that were doing is really, we’re working with the Iraqi security forces to develop a long-range combined- and joint-exercise program,” Buchanan said. “This will be under U.S. Central Command’s leadership, as part of the CENTCOM theater security cooperation plan.”

This year, he said, USF-I helped the Iraqis plan a joint training exercise series that involved the Iraqi army, navy, marine corps and air force. “They did so with our advice, and except for a couple of very small events, we weren’t directly involved in the execution,” he said.

Buchanan said Americans will continue to work with Iraqi leadership in both the MOI and the MOD, to help expand the program.

“Perhaps the next time around — and we’re are looking to see if this will be done during the rest of our time here or if it comes at some point in the future — it will be more of a combined exercise, so it’s not just Iraqi forces but Iraqi, U.S. and perhaps some of our regional partners from other countries,” Buchanan said.

The U.S. Navy’s relationship with the Iraqi navy might provide a good example of what’s to come. U.S. Navy Central, Buchanan said, works daily with the Iraqi navy to assist in securing territorial waters and offshore oil platforms.

“Our forces have been working at the port to advise, train, assist and equip the Iraqi navy and marine corps,” he said. “Then Navy Central force



Iraqi police with a local emergency services unit sign documents assuming responsibility for a checkpoint in Kirkuk province, July 28. (Photo by Spc. Sara Wakai)

has been working with them on the operational side. That relationship is not going to end with the departure of USF-I.”

Ultimately, it will be the U.S. embassy that helps create further opportunities for U.S. forces to interact and train with Iraqi forces after the departure of USF-I, Buchanan added.

Both the United States and the Iraqis signed a strategic framework agreement. That, Buchanan said, “aspires to a long-term and enduring partnership between Iraq and the United States and sets the conditions

for cooperation in a wide variety of areas — everything from agriculture and economic development, educational exchanges, science and technology, to defense and security cooperation.”

The broad, overarching agreement, he said “gives the azimuth to the embassy as it looks forward to enhance Iraq’s civil capacity in the future — 2012 and beyond. Defense and security cooperation are part of that, and it relates to both professionalization of the police forces and the military.” ♦



# Responsible transition

**coordinated efforts ensure successful transfer of property, facilities**

Story by C. Todd Lopez

“We can either close a base, return it to the government of Iraq, conduct a partial return of a base or complete an administrative closure.”

**I**N 2008, there were more than 500 military bases in Iraq manned by U.S. military personnel. Before United States Forces-Iraq leaves that country at the end of 2011, the future of each installation must be determined, and an appropriate transition must be made to either the Iraqis or the U.S. State Department.

In general military parlance, most of those locations are referred to as “forward operating bases,” though they are known by more specific names, based on their size. A “contingency operating base,” for instance, is a larger facility that might house a brigade combat team, a “contingency operating site” would be sized for a BCT-sized element or smaller and a “contingency operating location”

might house a battalion-sized element. There are also patrol bases, and joint security stations, and coalition outposts.

Each property, including the infrastructure must be evaluated before turnover. Equipment must be moved out or transitioned, and property must be legally and responsibly transitioned to the follow-on unit or organization that will occupy it.

By late July 2011, the portfolio of installations the U.S. military occupied in Iraq had dropped by some 90 percent, to about 57. By Dec. 31, that number will have dropped to zero.

Brigadier Gen. Scott F. “Rock” Donahue, director, J-7, U.S. Forces-Iraq, said bases are transitioned to the ment of Iraq through a “very deliberate,



base transition process” that he says is outlined in “The USF-I Base Transition Smartbook.”

“‘Transition,’ like FOB is an overarching term,” Donahue said. “We can either close a base, return it to the government of Iraq, conduct a partial return of a base or complete an administrative closure. The base transition Smartbook explains how we do this.”

There are many people involved in the process, with as many as five “lines of operation” needed to

complete a transition, the general said. Included among those are real estate management, environmental oversight, property distribution, contracting and documentation and final real estate transfer.

Transitioning a military installation after it has been used for so many years is akin to moving out of a home, Donahue said. “We inventory property and ensure facilities are clean, functional and free of any debts or financial burdens.”

He said about 45 days prior to USF-I leaving an installation in Iraq,

they begin a “weaning” process where various services cease. Included among those might be morale, welfare and recreation services as well as various utilities. “You start to thin and consolidate,” he said.

And while Soldiers are repositioned off those installations, to ensure a “responsible drawdown” of forces, USF-I coordinates with the Iraqis to determine who is going to accept the property on the installation, and who is going to accept the facility or base.



(Left) Spc. Kofi Evans Appiah, second from left, a mechanic with Company E, 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, and two other Co. E Soldiers, clear out a 20-foot container of scrap metal and usable materials prior to redeploying large amounts of equipment, Sept. 5, from Camp Liberty. (Photo by Capt. Alex Hunter)

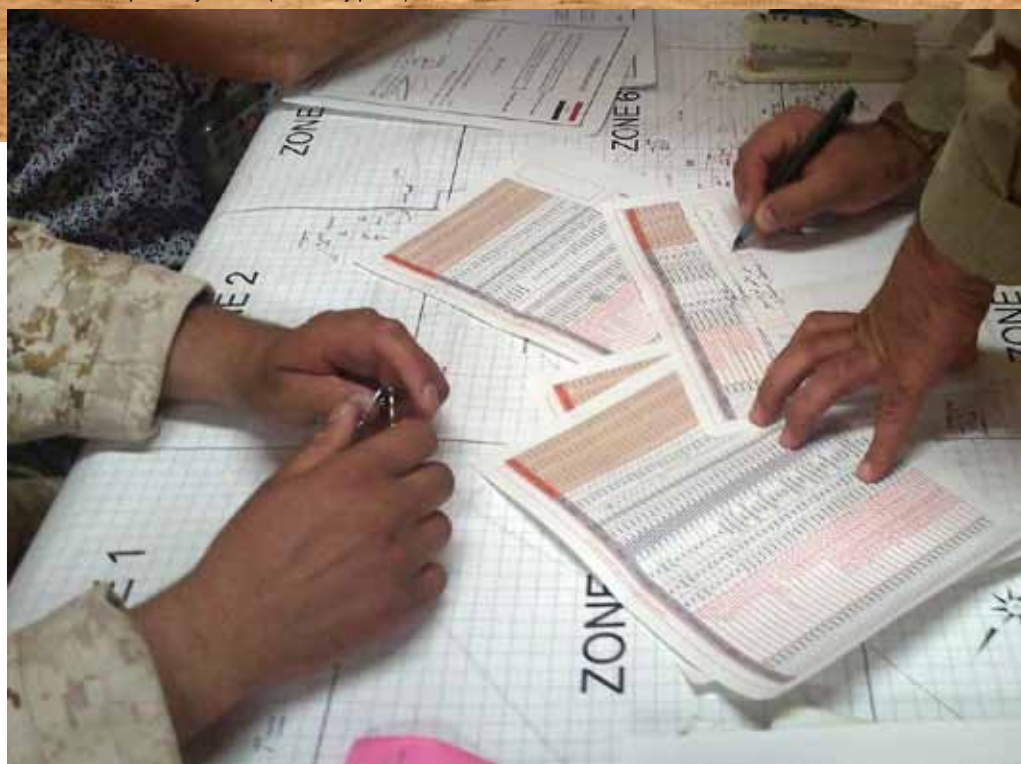
(Background photo) A humvee fresh from Iraq is repaired, cleaned and repainted at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, before being sent directly into Afghanistan to support combat troops there. (Photo by Spc. Monte Swift)





(Above) The location of what was once the Theater Internment Facility in Camp Bucca stands empty as it is turned over to Iraqi control. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Carney)

(Below) Iraqi army officials sign transition paperwork as they assume responsibility of Contingency Operating Site Sykes, July 13. Soldiers of 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, returned control of the base to Iraqi security forces. (U.S. Army photo)



The government of Iraq provides a “receivership secretariate,” who works with the USF-I J-7 basing team to complete the transition, Donahue said. The joint process is meant to ensure the transition is conducted fairly and accounts for the installation and everything on it: furniture, utilities and key infrastructure such as water treatment plants, hazardous waste treatment centers and incinerators.

In most cases, the installations are transitioned whole to an Iraqi unit. In the case of Victory Base Complex — the largest of the 12 “large” bases in Iraq, situated outside Baghdad International Airport — the installation will be parceled out in various pieces to different ministries of the Iraqi government, including the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense.

Allowing the government of Iraq to take pieces of VBC, means USF-I no longer needs to provide security for that part of the installation.

“It allows us to thin our own lines, which minimizes the resources we have to commit,” Donahue said. “That’s one aspect of that land you don’t have to

worry about.”

Not all installations will transfer to the Iraqis, however. Some “enduring sites” will instead transfer to the U.S. Department of State, for use by the U.S. embassy.

Another aspect of the installation transition process includes ensuring that the location meets U.S. Central

Command and USF-I environmental regulations. While Iraq itself has no environmental regulations, Donahue said, USF-I remains “very good stewards of the environment here. Our aim is to protect the natural environment as well as human health and safety,” he said.

Before a base is transitioned in Iraq, USF-I conducts several environmental



site closure surveys. "Our goal here is to mitigate any of our environmental challenges and minimize any of the environmental impacts," Donahue said.

The USF-I works to "mitigate," not "remediate" environmental issues in Iraq, he added. Fuel spills, for example, are something they routinely mitigate.

"We do that through environmental response and cleanup teams," Donahue said. The teams go out and assess a spill, or a lagoon, for instance

"and determine what we need to do to restore these facilities in accordance with CENTCOM 200-2."

The general was careful to point out that installations in Iraq are not being returned in accordance with U.S. environmental regulations. "That would be unrealistic and impractical, and extremely costly," he said.

In Iraq, burn pits have been removed and replaced with incinerators. Hazardous waste treatment centers have been set up and cleanup actions, such as oil spills, have taken place

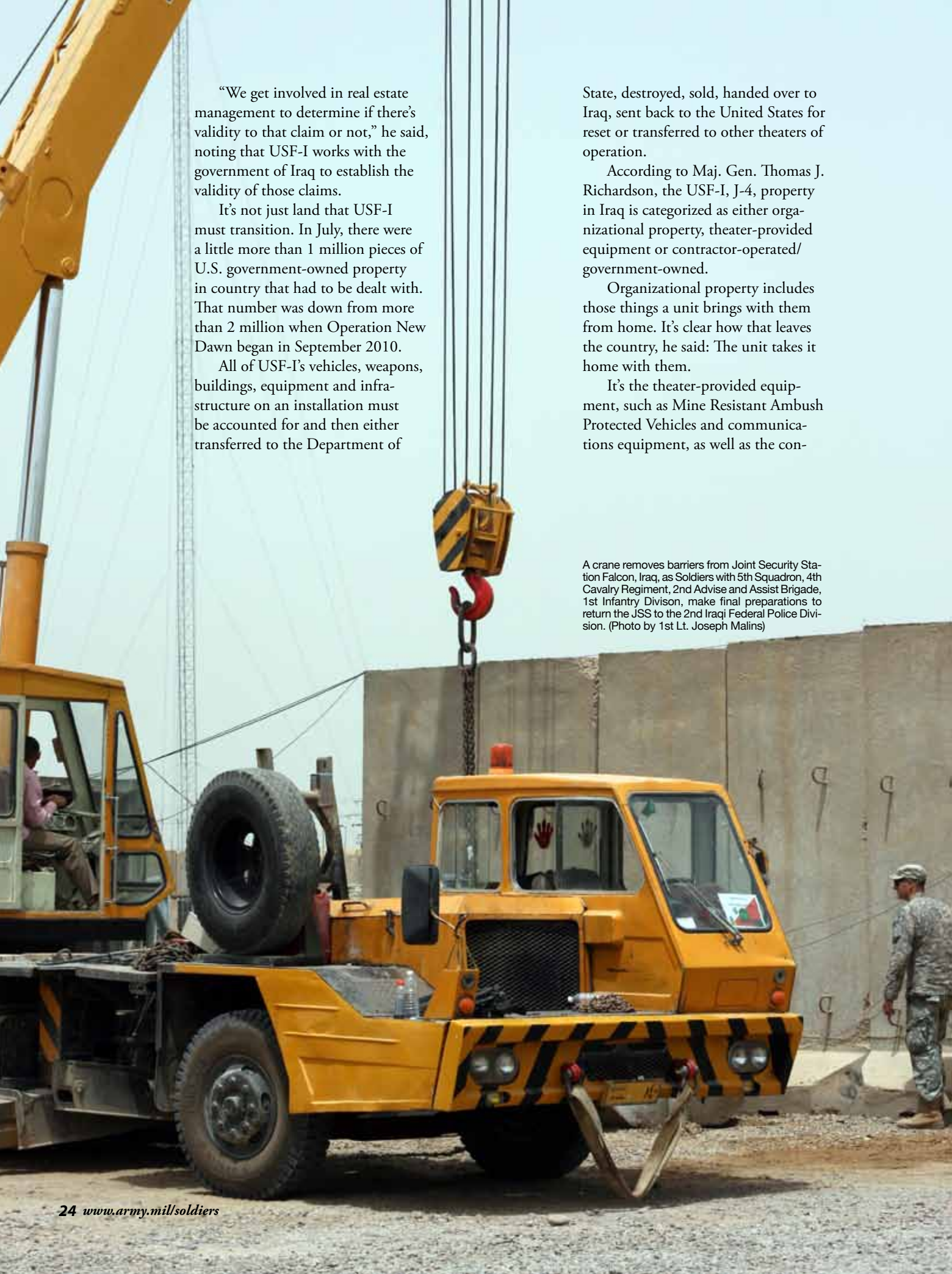
at more than 600 sites in the last year.

"It's down to how do we take care of lithium batteries or printer cartridges," he said. "From small things to the big things, like incineration of trash — including medical waste or regulated waste."

Transitioning land sometimes involves more than just accountability and environmental issues, Donahue said. Land deeds must be verified to ensure that no one has a claim on the land. In some cases, he said, there may be unexpected claims to land from outsiders.



Pfc. Antwan Logan, left, and Spc. Justin Willems, both with Company A, 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, prepare a shipment of ammunitions at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq. (Photo by Capt. Matthew Einhorn)



“We get involved in real estate management to determine if there’s validity to that claim or not,” he said, noting that USF-I works with the government of Iraq to establish the validity of those claims.

It’s not just land that USF-I must transition. In July, there were a little more than 1 million pieces of U.S. government-owned property in country that had to be dealt with. That number was down from more than 2 million when Operation New Dawn began in September 2010.

All of USF-I’s vehicles, weapons, buildings, equipment and infrastructure on an installation must be accounted for and then either transferred to the Department of

State, destroyed, sold, handed over to Iraq, sent back to the United States for reset or transferred to other theaters of operation.

According to Maj. Gen. Thomas J. Richardson, the USF-I, J-4, property in Iraq is categorized as either organizational property, theater-provided equipment or contractor-operated/government-owned.

Organizational property includes those things a unit brings with them from home. It’s clear how that leaves the country, he said: The unit takes it home with them.

It’s the theater-provided equipment, such as Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles and communications equipment, as well as the con-

A crane removes barriers from Joint Security Station Falcon, Iraq, as Soldiers with 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, make final preparations to return the JSS to the 2nd Iraqi Federal Police Division. (Photo by 1st Lt. Joseph Malins)



tractor-operated/government-owned equipment like fuel trucks, containerized housing units and generators, that must be dealt with.

How it all gets where it belongs, Richardson said, involves “a very methodical process that only the U.S. military could come up with.”

Theater-provided equipment, for example, goes into a database and a determination is then made regarding its disposition.

“That property, for instance a radio, might need to be reset,” Richardson said, meaning restoring an item to an as-new condition. “So it goes to Tobyhanna Army Depot for reset. Or something else that doesn’t need to be reset might go to Fort Hood. That disposition is given all the way down to the supply sergeant.”

A unit supply sergeant then does all the paperwork and takes it to the redistribution property assistance team, where it is taken off the sergeant’s property book and added to another

set of books.

“There’s a shipping address and trucks to pick it up, and eventually it goes home,” Richardson said, adding most non-sensitive items will leave Iraq by contractor-provided surface transportation. Sensitive items, such as weapons, are taken southbound through Kuwait by military convoy. In July, he said, about 500 truckloads of equipment made their way to Kuwait. Urgent-need items bound for Afghanistan, like firefighting equipment, depart Iraq by air.

Air Force Capt. Chris L. Martagon runs the RPAT yard at Victory Base Complex near Baghdad International Airport.

He and his team of Soldiers and Airmen are responsible for gathering both equipment and vehicles that will be shipped out of country back to the United States, or moved to other missions in either Afghanistan or Iraq.

“(Business) is definitely picking up now because units are trying to get

out of here. So, as they complete their mission, they are getting rid of all their stuff so they can redeploy and head back to the States,” Martagon said. “We are staying consistently busy.”

In July, there were hundreds of pieces of equipment in his yard, including about 101 MRAP vehicles that he is responsible for. Of those, about 40 were headed to Kuwait, and the rest were headed to other missions in Iraq.

When a piece of rolling stock, like an MRAP, comes to the yard, Air Force Staff Sgt. Lamar Harvey, the noncommissioned officer in charge of rolling stock, manages the in-processing inspection of the vehicle.

“We’re looking ... to make sure they have the correct paperwork, and make sure these vehicles are free of trash, and make sure all the accountable items are there,” Harvey said. “We also verify the vehicle identification number, stock numbers, serial numbers and make sure it matches up with the paperwork so we know what we are accountable for.”

Pfc. Michael Groves, a combat engineer with Company C, Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, tosses a roll of electrical cable from one rooftop to another as he and other Soldiers dismantle and pack non-essential electrical systems at Contingency Operating Location K1, Kirkuk province, July 24. (Photo by Sgt. David Strayer)



The RPAT yard also accepts non-rolling stock, including computers, communications equipment and even surplus enhanced-small arms protective inserts.

Across Iraq, there are about eight RPAT yards, with the one managed by

Martagon being the busiest. Between October 2010 and July 2011, those eight RPAT yards together received and shipped more than 5,000 pieces of rolling stock. They also received and shipped more than 80,000 pieces of non-rolling stock.

Facility items on an installation — the air conditioners, containerized housing units, cooking supplies in dining facilities, tents, latrine facilities, shower facilities and generators, for instance — might all either be destroyed, turned in to the Defense

U.S. servicemembers prepare facilities at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, for transfer as part of the drawdown in Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)





Reutilization Management Office or given to the Iraqis as foreign excess personal property, but it all must be itemized.

"We account for everything," Richardson said. "Every T-wall, every Hesco barrier is accounted for."



When FOB Sykes was closed in the north, it was turned over to the Iraqis, Richardson said.

"There were about 7,000 pieces of property there," he said. "We shipped roughly 500-600 items out of there to go to the State Department." The transfer shipment included the fire-fighting equipment at FOB Sykes and a gymnasium. The rest, Richardson said, became FEPP.

A FEPP package, he said, could be almost 350 pages long, and itemizes things that will go to the Iraqis. Getting things on that list involves a business case analysis to determine what the item is worth, and what it would cost to ship it versus giving it away.

"We consider it a cost avoidance," Richardson said. "Because if we have to send it all out, we have to pay for someone to ... take it all apart."

Stuff that's been used in Iraq for seven years, for instance, may not be worth the cost of shipping it home. Other items might not have any value in the United States. Containerized housing units, used as sleeping quar-

ters by Soldiers in Iraq, for example, run on 220-volt power.

"If I would send that back to the United States, what would we do with it?" asked Richardson. "We are a 110-volt society." So the CHUs stay in Iraq, with a FEPP sticker indicating they will become the property of the Iraqis, if they want them.

"The challenge is to make sure we stay synchronized throughout this process," Richardson said. "That takes a large amount of communications between all of the elements turning things and working each of the problems as they arise and in finding solutions to fix the problems."

Richardson said USF-I has done the analysis needed to orchestrate the transition out of Iraq, and determined that it has what it needs to get the job done.

"We have enough trucks, we have enough time and processes to get everything out of here, and do it in an orderly fashion," he said. "This is probably the first time in the American history that we have left a place like this and in this fashion." ♦

Soldiers of 101st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, leave Manila Training Center after removing equipment and excess supplies during the base's transfer of authority to the Kurdish Regional Guard near Chamchamal, Iraq, Aug. 4. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Robert DeDeaux)







Pfc. Efrain Santiago steadies Spc. Patrick Johnson during firefighter training at Camp Taji. They are volunteers with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st "Garryowen" Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Team, 1st Cavalry Division. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Josh Risher)

Spc. Hannah R. Perez, an equipment repair specialist and Spc. Paola N. Gonzalez, a shower, laundry and renovations specialist, both with the 263rd Quartermaster Company, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), retrieve laundry from the Laundry Advanced System March 13 at Contingency Operating Base Taji. (Photo by Sgt. Ryan Twist)

Soldiers in



Command Sgt. Maj. Jack Love (left), the sergeant of A Company, 2nd Battalion 32nd Airborne Infantry Regiment, breaches a door during an operation in Tal Afar. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class John Laughter)





unteer firefighters  
Brigade Combat



Pvt. James Barnett, assigned to the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, applies a splint to one of his fellow Soldiers during the medical application part of the battalion's combat life saver competition on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Feb. 26. (Photo by Spc. Terence Ewings)



Maj. O'Neal Williams, science advisor for the Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology Directorate, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, machines parts at the 1st Battalion, 402nd AFSB Mobile Parts Hospital at Joint Base Balad. (Photo by Gayland Putnam)

(Background image) The sun rises over Contingency Operating Base Speicher, as participants in the 2009 Joint Best Warrior Competition for Multi-National Division-North march to their first lane in the early morning hours of July 28. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephanie van Geete)

on a first  
25th Air-  
courtyard  
photo by



# Customs inspections keeping homeland secure

Story and photos by Spc. Anthony T. Zane

**T**HE number of military units packing up equipment and personal belongings is increasing as the U.S. continues to prepare its exit from Iraq as part of Operation New Dawn. But before anything crosses over U.S. borders, everything that is shipped back to the States must go through a thorough customs inspection.

All customs inspections for Contingency Operating Base Adder go through Sgt. Thomas Vice II, COB Adder customs project manager, of the 239th Military Police Company.

"Anything that's going home has to go through customs," said Vice. "To start, the units have to send in a customs request form. The standard operating procedure is to get the request in at least 10 days prior to the inspection. That way I've got time to make sure

everything is right. I make sure that the date for inspection is clear and that we have a stamp reserved for that date."

After the inspection is completed, the paperwork is signed and stamped with an official customs stamp that certifies the cargo in the container has been properly inspected.

"Because we only have a certain amount of stamps, we can only have so many inspections per day," he added.

All Soldiers prepare their equipment and personal gear prior to the inspection by placing it on the ground in organized sections.

The customs inspector then briefs Soldiers on the inspection process and goes over the list of items they are not allowed to ship. All items to be inspected are laid out in front of the large metal storage containers used for shipping equipment and gear, known as Conexes (short for container express).

"It's a 100-percent inspection," said Vice. "You might have a 20-foot Conex with 80 duffle bags and 60 footlockers, all with personal gear, and everything has to be dumped out, sifted through and inspected."

While the average inspection takes about three to four hours for a seasoned inspector, said Vice, the time it takes to complete an inspection varies on how much equipment or gear the unit has to be inspected.

"One of the main things that we look for is cleanliness, because any kind of organic matter — dirt, sand, grass, plants, anything like that — is an absolute no-go," said Vice. "We don't want anything messing with the ecosystem back home, and we're trying to prevent that from happening."

Many Soldiers may not understand the environmental concern that is involved with the inspection process.

Sgt. Julian A. McKinnon, a customs border control preclearance agent from the 1st Cavalry Division, briefs Soldiers prior to performing customs work on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, Oct. 15.





"It's really important, especially at the port cities, because when containers are opened and something bad is in there like animal products or soil that could have time to culture, you could get bacteria that can be harmful back in the States," said Sgt. Julian A. McKinnon, customs border control preclearance agent, 1st Cavalry Division.

The other thing customs inspectors are on the lookout for is any illegal items.

"Another thing we look for is any kind of contraband," said Vice.

"You can't have pornography, alcohol, drugs or illegal weapons."

The inspection protocol used in theater comes from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, said Vice.

"People try to bring their protein powder or work-out supplements with them," said Vice. "Well, if the seal has been broken, they can't bring it."

The most effective way to find an illegal substance is to use K-9's, and the decision to use the dogs is left to Vice's discretion.

"Sometimes we bring dogs," said Vice. "The K-9 unit works with us a lot being that we're the provost marshal's office, but the decision to use them is nothing in particular. It's just random."

There have been no significant violations so far on COB Adder, but the risk is always present.

"Not that I've seen," said McKinnon, "but you hear of a few who try to smuggle drugs, alcohol or a certain type of knife that is not allowed to go back to the States."

Beyond illegal drugs, weapons and organic materials, another concern has developed since the beginning of the U.S. presence in the Middle East.

Soldiers will buy a lot of DVDs from the Iraqi vendors over here and

ship them home, said Vice. But the rules have become more strict about that.

Now Soldiers are limited to one DVD title or one box set.

"There's not much room for leniency," said McKinnon. "We go by the book."

But the inspection process is not complete once all equipment and gear is loaded into the containers and sealed.

Once containers are inspected, signed off on and sealed here, then they go to Kuwait from where they are then shipped back to the States, said Vice. At that point, all containers in Kuwait are subject to another customs inspection. That inspection is done randomly to at least 10 percent of the containers.

"If they get 500 Conexes in that day, they're going through 50 of them," said Vice. "That's more or less making



Sgt. Thomas Vice II, customs program manager from 239th Military Police Company, inspects Soldiers' equipment during a customs inspection on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, Oct. 15.

sure that we're doing our job; that we don't miss things."

"It's important for people to know that if the customs inspector is doing his job properly, they are not going to get anything past him," said McKinnon.

For the most part, Soldiers understand the importance of the inspections process.

"It's helping to safeguard the U.S. economy," said Vice.

"Agriculturally, it helps the farmers from losing money due to bacteria or plant diseases that could be transported from here to the States," said Vice. "It also helps to keep untraced and unmarked weapons off the streets."

The customs inspection process is vital to homeland security.

"We're not out to get people," said McKinnon. "It's not about that. It's about doing the right thing and the safety of the Soldiers." ♦



(Above) Soldiers from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment from Fort Hood, Texas, pack their gear into a container after a mandatory customs inspection on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, Oct. 15.

(Left) Sgt. Thomas Vice II, customs program manager, 239th Military Police Company, inspects Soldiers' equipment and gear during a mandatory customs inspection on COB Adder, Oct. 15.

(Right) Sgt. Julian A. McKinnon, customs border control preclearance agent, 1st Cavalry Division, prepares paperwork to finalize his customs inspection on COB Adder, Oct. 15.







# Rebuilding the foundation



Iraqi Sgt. Mustafa watches as instructors from the Camp Taji Noncommissioned Officer Academy fire while qualifying with M-16 Rifles. U.S. trainers worked to build the skills and confidence of the cadre of the academy by making them experts on both the M-16 and AK-47 rifles.



# Academy builds confidence, skills of Iraqi NCOs

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class  
Raymond Piper

**B**UILDING a strong and effective noncommissioned officer corps that lives up to the title of “backbone” takes time. Iraq lost experienced NCOs through attrition during the Iraq-Iran War and years of sanctions, as well as the invasion in 2003 and subsequent dissolution of the old Iraqi army.

Lieutenant Gen. Riyadh Jalal Tawfig, Iraqi Ground Forces Command deputy commander, compared the Iraqi NCOs to the foundation that the old army was built on, and he said it is one that has taken time to rebuild.

“When we started reorganizing the Iraqi army we didn’t have the old army enlisted joining. It was rare to have a former enlisted soldier rejoin. This

created a challenge to develop NCOs,” Riyadh said.

It’s a challenge that the U.S. Army faced in the past as well and one that Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Vincent Meyers experienced in his 33 years of service. His knowledge in training U.S., Ukrainian and Ethiopian soldiers was leveraged to aid in further developing the Camp Taji NCO Academy.

“What I tell people is that the Iraqi army today is a lot like the American army from 1970s. The American Army had to rebuild the NCO corps after 10 years of conflict in Vietnam where a large number of NCOs were either killed in action or got out,” Meyers said. “It’s the same here; you can’t take hundreds of people and try to say ‘mass produce NCOs.’ It’s not going to happen.”

U.S. and coalition forces have trained Iraqi forces throughout Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn to help prepare them to take over the security of their nation. NCOs were not left behind in this training, but it wasn’t until November 2008 that a pilot program began to establish a formalized NCO education system. The program was finalized in October 2010, providing a standard to train NCOs through the partnered efforts of U.S. Forces-Iraq, NATO Training Mission-Iraq and the Iraqi Ministry of Defense.

“Even though there were many obstacles, we started with the basic steps and there has been definite improvement and it continues today,” Riyadh said, comparing the training that U.S. forces provided to the Iraqi army throughout OIF to planting a seed.

“As they trained Iraqi soldiers, they trained trainers that will continue to

train the Iraqi forces,” Riyadh continued. “Just like the U.S. forces that continue to train when they return home, the Iraqi army is going to continue training.”

The successful transition of training Iraqi soldiers rests in NCOs not only knowing the skills, but being confident in teaching them.

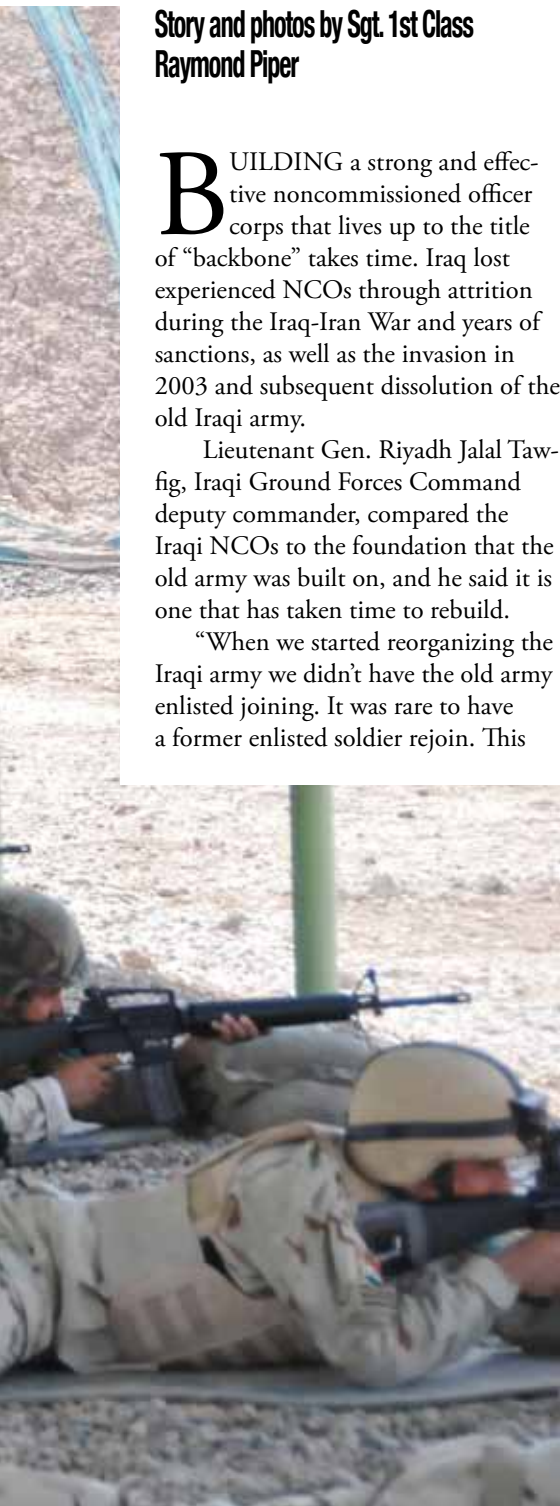
“What we want is to get the Iraqi noncommissioned officer instructors to be able to teach their own soldiers. That way they get prestige,” Meyers said. “It’s great to have an American sergeant teach them, but where is the enduring part of that?”

The Camp Taji NCO Academy is one such training facility where some Iraqi soldiers arrive with little knowledge, but leave the academy better prepared to lead and train. The facility creates an enduring environment where the academy grows NCOs at all levels. The long-term intent is that as new Iraqi NCOs come through the ranks they will go through each level, much like the U.S. Army NCO education system.

The academy hosts three senior-leader courses a year, two junior-leader courses and multiple weapons training and unit trainer courses. The junior and senior leader courses focus on building the skills they will need to train soldiers, such as leadership, map reading, marksmanship and weapons maintenance, training, tactics and counterinsurgency.

Each student works from a laptop and are connected to each other through a local network that allows them to share information and course material. The classes also focus on basic computer skills.

“Soldiers coming from units that



have never conducted this type of training are able to learn it here and gain leadership skills by leading others in the tasks, so they can become better NCOs,” said Iraqi Lt. Col. Abbas Fadel, academy executive officer.

The hallways and classrooms walls reflect the purpose of the academy with posters designed to continue the Iraqi NCO’s learning even when they aren’t sitting in class. The goal is that even on break or walking through the halls the students are able to learn.

Learning never stops, but it doesn’t just revolve around the soldier skills the Iraqi noncommissioned officers develop at the academy. The ultimate goal is to develop leaders, who are confident and able to teach soldiers when they return

to their units.

To create that confidence, the classes focus on 80 percent hands-on training where the students perform tasks and learn from each other. Twenty percent of the training is given by the instructors to ensure the students understand the lesson then the task, condition and standard is given to the students, then they have to execute. The instructors guide the students and provide them with a grade following the exercise.

When the students first arrive, they are unsure what to expect as they begin to learn and teach each other, Meyers said. As the course goes on, their confidence increases with their abilities to successfully complete the classes.

“When they get up there and get it right, and someone — not an American instructor, an Iraqi instructor — says, ‘Hey you did a good job,’ you begin to see a real transformation at about the 30-day mark.”

“Some of the students have never read a map or used a computer, so they are very motivated and become more focused as they go through the courses,” Abbas said.

The academy started with 20 seats, but has increased its capacity to 50 students per class. At the end of each course, the students are given a CD to bring back to their unit with all of the training material, giving them tools to train soldiers with.

“Now more than ever the Iraqi

Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice, command sergeant major to the deputy commanding general for operations, U.S. Forces-Iraq, and senior American and Iraqi noncommissioned officers view the targets after the Iraqi NCOs fired during a range at the Camp Taji NCO Academy. Rice worked to highlight the effectiveness of the NCO academy to the Iraqi Ground Forces Command leadership and Iraqi Division commanders and sergeants major.







Iraqi Sgt. Saif Majid, a Camp Taji NCO Academy instructor, adjusts the front post sight of his rifle. One of the goals of the academy was to make the instructors proficient and confident.

Army needs good NCOs attending the courses that will go back to their units and teach and mentor soldiers,” said Iraqi Sgt. 1st Class Ali, an instructor at the academy since 2005.

One of the ways used to instill confidence in the instructors was to develop a cadre of Iraqi NCOs to be experts and then share that expertise with the students. To reach that goal, Meyers subscribed to the example set by Baron von Steuben more than 200 years ago. Steuben is credited with being one of the fathers of the Continental Army, and teaching them the essentials of military drills, tactics, and disciplines. He wrote the Revolutionary War Drill Manual, known as “The Blue Book,” which served as the standard United States drill manual until the War of 1812.



Iraqi soldiers at the Camp Taji NCO Academy check their targets after qualification firing. The confidence that the Iraqi NCOs gain from attending the academy has encouraged Iraqi commanders to send more of their NCOs to the offered courses.



“He didn’t take a thousand guys,” Meyers said. “He asked for the hundred best guys and trained them and built up their confidence, so they could train everyone else. That’s what we did.”

Meyers said it was important to find something that was important to the Iraqi military and for the Iraqi army it was marksmanship. The U.S. trainers took 10 instructors from the academy, dubbed them the “Iraqi Rifles” and drilled them with the goal of making them experts on the M-16 Rifle and the AK-47 assault rifle. The Iraqi army fields both rifles within its units, so it was crucial for the cadre to be confident with both weapons. Each time the students were on the range, a different NCO would be in charge to help them understand that when they were in charge, they were responsible for the training and the range.

“The range and marksmanship were the tools we used to build their confidence as noncommissioned officers,” Meyers said. “We weren’t so much



worried about them being able to shoot as we were in allowing them to get out there and be leaders.”

During a tour of the facility, the range was hot and Iraqi Sgt. Mustafa was the range NCOIC. The first step

was for the Iraqi soldiers to zero their weapons then qualify on the 100-meter range using paper targets. When they finished firing, the soldiers were eager to move down range and see how they had done. Several senior leaders from

(Above) An Iraqi soldier adjusts the front sight post of his M-16 rifle after establishing his shot group during zeroing. Marksmanship is one of the key skills taught at the academy to help the NCOs gain confidence. (Below) An instructor from the Camp Taji NCO Academy fires for qualification. The academy maintains and operates the range facility, so students attending the leadership courses can improve and gain confidence on both the M-16 and AK-47 rifles.





the academy, senior U.S. NCOs and Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice, command sergeant major to the deputy commanding general for operations, U.S. Forces-Iraq, were also observing the training. When the last shot rang out, Mustafa ensured that everyone had cleared their rifles before allowing anyone to move and examine the targets.

"He had no problem stopping all these senior people because he was taught that when you are in charge, you are responsible," Meyers said. "He was responsible for that range that day."

Another Iraqi soldier had a weapons malfunction and had to fire an unzeroed weapon, knowing that he would probably be off target. His goal wasn't to hit targets, but to evaluate his shot group and adjust the rifle based on his previous zero. After firing, he immediately went back to his rifle and made his adjustments.

"That is the type of stuff that gives instant credibility to Iraqi sergeants, when you have a noncommissioned officer that is confident and knows exactly what he is doing," Meyers said. "When you know something it builds confidence. When you have confidence, you can be a leader."

The other side to building the cadre of instructors was to have the U.S. Soldiers be hands off once the instructors were trained and ready to lead to create an enduring Iraqi-led training program.

"We have built an enduring process and that should be with everything we are doing," Meyers said. "I think we have gotten to a point they can build their own NCO corps. There is not much more we can do other than showing their leadership how our NCO courses are set up, so they can help them determine the assets they need to set up courses."

Demonstrating what the NCO academy can do for the professionalism of the Iraqi army is something that Rice highlighted to Iraqi division command sergeants major and the Iraqi Ground Forces Command after his first visit to the academy.

"After Command Sgt. Maj. Rice's visit, he asked the IGFC command to visit and tour the facility," Abbas said.

"The word really got out after their visit and the IGFC and the Iraqi Army has a better view on how the NCO academy changes soldiers into leaders. They see that their NCOs are more confident and how much they learn at the academy."

The accomplishments of the academy led them to receive more resources

and equipment following each class, aiding them in training better NCOs.

"The graduates, people who are educated, benefit from the knowledge that they learn and then can apply it to their unit," Abbas said. "The view of the NCO academy is changing and all of the Iraqi army will benefit from the training." ♦

A U.S. trainer at the Camp Taji NCO Academy watches as Iraqi Sgt. Saif Majid, an academy instructor, adjusts the front post sight of his rifle. Majid required no assistance in the adjustments because one of the goals of the academy was to make the instructors proficient and confident.





A painting of Cpl. Kory Wiens and his search dog, Sgt. Cooper, is displayed in a large wooden frame. Cpl. Wiens is kneeling, wearing a U.S. Army uniform with his name tag visible. Sgt. Cooper is a light-colored dog sitting next to him. Below the painting are two commemorative plaques. The plaque on the right is titled "Corporal Kory Wiens And Specialized Search Dog (SGT) Cooper" and contains a detailed account of their service and sacrifice. The plaque on the left is partially visible and also commemorates their service. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# Tributes to the fallen come home

These plaques and this painting, a memorial to Cpl. Kory Wiens and his search dog, Sgt. Cooper, will likely be sent back to Wiens' family in the United States.

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## Story by C. Todd Lopez

IN some places on Camp Victory in Iraq, they're so many concrete T-walls lining the streets that, combined with the general bleakness of the place, and the dust in the air and the eerie dusk-like light it creates on everything, it'd be the perfect setting for a sci-fi movie about maybe a mining camp on some desolate remote planet.

Occasionally, though, there's a splash of color on one of those T-walls — walls meant to protect tents and their occupants from possible mortar attacks from outside the gate. Sometimes it's a unit insignia there on the wall, with maybe some Latin on there too.

There's also sometimes a list of names of Soldiers who have died — memorials to those killed in combat.

"You could walk into some of these base camps that we've been at six or seven or eight years and you will see row after row of T-walls with individual names on them," said Lt. Col. Jerry E. Brooks, the command historian at U.S. Forces Iraq.

Soldiers want a way to remember their buddies lost in battle, or an IED attack or a rocket attack Brooks said.

"These units, even down to a company level, will say we want to do something to honor this person — because we've trained with him, he is our buddy and we want to dedicate our deployment to him," Brooks said.

Nearly 4,500 Soldiers, Marines, Sailors and Airmen died in Iraq during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn. While their bodies went home, their buddies stayed behind to continue the fight. To remember their friends they put up plaques, named buildings or rooms in buildings, painted names on T-walls or on plywood signs, or even put up the traditional boots, bayonet, helmet and dogtag memorial — such as at Camp Adder.

There, Brooks said, the boots and helmet represented many Soldiers lost, with a plaque indicating all those lost at Adder. "What they've done is, rather than it being a single unit's memorial, it has evolved

into a base camp memorial," Brooks said.

Whatever his buddies used to memorialize their friend, one thing is for sure — it would be inappropriate to leave behind what was created to remember the war dead.

"You don't just want to leave it," Brooks said. "What you don't want is to turn over a base to the Iraqis or the Somalis or whoever, and leave your memorials there, and a couple of nights later they decide to loot the place."

The "worst case scenario," Brooks said, might involve insurgents desecrating what was meant to honor those lost in the fight.

"Next thing you know there's a picture of two al-Qaida fighters there firing at a memorial for some Soldier who died in Iraq," Brooks said. "There's the impact on the family, and it's just the spectacle of it."

So in leaving Iraq, the Army makes sure to take care of not just equipment there, but also the memorials that are left behind. They are all either sent home, and hopefully sent to the families of those they memorialize, or, if it's not possible to send them home, they are photographed and then "sanitized."

"They're whitewashed," Brooks said, referring to the T-walls, for instance, which are far too heavy to be brought home with the last units departing the country.

"If the last unit has a desire they

could take every single memorial back — all they would have to do is declare it their own unit property, and they could take it back," he said.

The only restrictions, he said, are space, or cost, or the possibility that some things, like the weathered old wood of a plywood memorial won't get through customs in the United States.

There are Army rules about what constitutes an "official" memorial, Brooks said. They involve the size of a unit authorized to be memorialized, or the types of action a Soldier must perform if he is to be individually memorialized.

But the memorials put up on base camps in Iraq are not official memorials put up by a committee. They are memorials put up by Soldiers for other Soldiers who knew them. They are not granite and bronze installations on dedicated space after years of lobbying, such as what might happen in Washington — but are instead the humbler and maybe the more honest recognition of one warrior by another.

"What he did was important, and it's important to remember that they were here," Brooks said. "But we do what we can for the individuals that were here and made the ultimate sacrifice. Unfortunately, you can't get them all back, but you can take a photograph, you can take the plaques back. It's up to these units to do that. These people they have offered us the best they can — this is small consolation — but it's something." ♦

Soldiers requested portions of this memorial, for Soldiers from the 48th Brigade Combat Team, be shipped home. (Inset) U.S. Soldiers are not the only military members to recognize their fallen. Romanian military have also built memorials in Iraq.



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### **SSG David Beck**

A leader. A mentor. An example to other Soldiers. Staff Sergeant David Beck is a true NCO. The recipient of five Purple Hearts, his sense of leadership was best epitomized when, during a 2009 combat mission, he took a bullet to the head. As described on his commendation, "SSG Beck continued to lead his squad

in battle, effectively suppressing the enemy and allowing all troops on the patrol to return to the Command Observation Post uninjured." One fellow Soldier says that it's in SSG Beck's nature to put his men above himself. For SSG Beck, it comes down to one sentence, "I am a Leader of Soldiers, an NCO."

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# Take 5

## Winter Driving Tactics

SOURCE: FIELD MANUAL 55-30, ARMY MOTOR  
TRANSPORT UNITS AND OPERATIONS, APPENDIX G,  
VEHICLE OPERATIONS IN ADVERSE WEATHER

### *Before every mission:*

- Remove ice, snow and condensation from all windows and mirrors before operating the vehicle
- Ensure defrosters and windshield wipers operate properly
- Keep mirrors clean and adjusted

### *When the tactical situation and local SOP allows:*

- Use headlights during snowstorms and periods of reduced visibility
- Increase following distances between vehicles
- Use ground guides while backing and when visibility is restricted (e.g., roads or trails obscured by deep snow)



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